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DID THE MONKS PRESERVE THE LATIN CLASSICS?

SINCE the civilized world has held the classics in honor, the admirers of the cell and cloister have claimed that, throughout the Dark Ages, the monks loved and studied the classics, and, by copying, preserved them for posterity.

This claim has been pertinaciously urged; and as it has been admitted by certain writers of good repute and great complaisance, there is danger that it will become one of the conventional statements in history.

Believing as I do, that the admission has been made without due examination and in gross misconception of the spirit and history of Mediæval times, and particularly of the monastic system prior to the year 1200, I ask your attention to the opposite view of this subject. I shall treat it as one purely historical, keeping in view nothing but the Latin classics, and how they were treated by the monks of Western Europe up to the end of the twelfth century.

EXTENT AND AMOUNT OF ROMAN LITERATURE.

While the modern public is familiar with the multiplication of books by the printing press, it knows little or nothing of the ease and rapidity with which the "tachygraphs," the swift penmen of Rome, threw off their manuscripts. It is difficult for us to conceive that there were in Rome large numbers of professional literary men, great libraries, public and private, numerous persons engaged in book-selling as a regular business and having a trade with all the provinces of the Roman Empire and with booksellers

in all their cities and towns; that there were in the Roman Empire more copyists probably than there are printers in the United States; that the ancients made better ink than we do; and that their parchment volumes were more durable than our paper books. And we, it may be, admit nothing in favor of the Romans, quite so reluctantly as that, in the matter of books and literature, they were in some respects, barring the difference between types and penmanship, quite equal to the Americans of the twentieth century.

The Public Libraries of Rome, about the year 100, were magnificent. The *Octavian* was built of marble; its floors were laid in mosaic work; its ceilings were frescoed in gold; and the walls were decorated with glass and ivory. A hundred statues stood there upon pedestals. In it there were more than one hundred thousand volumes neatly stored in cases of cedar and ebony. Catalogues, with references to each volume, by case and number, hung upon the walls and pillars. There were tables and seats for the students; and assistant librarians were there to find any volume required.

The *Palatine Library* rivalled the *Octavian*; and the *Ulpian*, newly erected by the Emperor, was the most magnificent of the three. In these libraries were collected the literary treasures of the Roman Empire, and in them were daily gathered readers, students, writers and authors.

There were also many private libraries: Every lawyer, author, rich man and patrician had one. Among the best known collections in the literature of the age were those which had been begun by Paulus Æmilius, Sulla, Lucullus, Varro, and Cicero. Some of these were large and were kept in buildings which had been erected especially for them. There were many others. This we know from numerous indications in the manners and customs of the times, and from hints in the books which are still extant. These private libraries existed not only in Rome, but in the towns and cities of the provinces, and, doubtless, in the villas of rich men. In the ruins of Herculaneum one was found. It contained eighteen hundred volumes, sadly charred by the molten lava of many volcanic

eruptions; but the art of the chemist restored them enough to show that they were all on the same subject, the Epicurean philosophy. If the Roman literature contained eighteen hundred books on that one subject, how many must it have contained in all?

There were schools in all parts of the provinces; and these must have created a demand for books. Some of these were famous,—we would call them colleges,—e. g., those at Carthage, Marseilles, Lyons and Narbonne. There were schools of rhetoric at Rhodes and Miletus; of philosophy, at Athens; and of law, at Beyroot, on the coast of Syria; and there was a renowned University, at Alexandria, in Egypt. Each of these schools gave employment to copyists.

Some of the swift writers worked alone; others were employed, in large numbers, by capitalists. Atticus, the friend of Cicero, is said to have employed two hundred, most of them slaves. A description of the *Scriptorium* or writing room has been handed down to us. The room was large and furnished with desks for the copyists. The reader sat on a raised platform in the front and center; he read slowly, and the copyists wrote. Their work was carefully revised. When approved, the long strip, on which the writing was done, was rolled upon a stick, tied up with ribbon or string, and labeled. It was then ready for sale.

The Roman booksellers often published what is now called an *edition de luxe*. The finest of these were written in golden letters on purple vellum and embellished with portraits of emperors, authors and other celebrities. The elaborate initial letters of books and chapters were the models of the wonderful decorative illumination of missals and other precious books of the Middle Ages.

The Romans knew nothing of movable types and printing presses. Their method of producing by single copies was not so favorable as ours to the publication of daily newspapers. They managed, however, to get out two, at Rome. They were called the *Acta Diurna*, a name from which our word "Journal" is derived. One of them was the official organ of the government; and the other was devoted to social, political and military news. The number of copies issued is unknown.

The Roman authors had a custom similar to our reunions to hear an essay followed by a discussion of it. When an author finished a work, he invited other authors and the booksellers to hear and criticize it.

It is a great pity that there is not extant a contemporary bibliography of Latin literature. The best help in that regard are the frequent allusions to books in the works preserved to us. The elder Pliny, in his thirty-seven books on Natural History, is said to have quoted by name from several hundred authors. The younger Pliny claims that, in preparing his history, he consulted at least a thousand writers of chronicles, annals, history and biography. The elder Pliny and Cato each published a Cyclopædia. Some authors were prolific; Varro is said to have published more books than Alexander Dumas.

To the student of history, the above facts will suffice to freshen his conceptions of the complexity, variety, universality and wealth of the expression in literature of the mind of ancient Rome.

PERISHED.

Of the innumerable Latin works of the classic period of Rome, there remain, in round numbers, a hundred: I count the survivors, mutilated and whole; and of the immense army of more ancient times, only a company answers to roll-call

About the year 740, Pepin the Short, of France, wrote to Pope Paul I., asking him as a favor to send to Paris all the books he could find at Rome. Paul caused diligent search to be made in the papal palace and the city. The result was, he sent to Pepin five books: an antiphonal, or elementary book of church music; a responsal; and three short treatises: one on grammar, one on orthography and one on geometry.

Between the years 340 and 740, the classics had almost disappeared.

THE MONASTIC SPIRIT.

In those four centuries, the monks were the most striking feature in the Church of Egypt and of Europe. Who were they?

The answer to this is best gleaned from the lives of the hermit fathers and the histories of the monasteries. Rev. Charles Kingsley, in his book on this subject, gives many of the facts. He says:

"Eight hundred years before St. Anthony fled into the desert, that young Hindoo rajah, whom men call Buddha now, had fled into the forest, leaving wives and kingdom, to find rest for his soul. He denounced caste; he preached poverty, asceticism, self-annihilation. He founded a religion * * * democratic and ascetic, with its convents, saint-worship, pilgrimages, miraculous relics, rosaries and much more which strangely anticipates the monastic religion."

This asceticism of the Orient began to infect Egyptian Christianity, in the second century; and in a few generations the mountains and deserts of Egypt were full of Christian men who had fled out of the sinful, dying world, to attain everlasting life. Celibacy, poverty, unconditional obedience to superiors, continued meditation upon the vanity of the world, the sinfulness of the flesh, the glories of heaven and the horrors of hell, were their vows.

Athanasius wrote the life of St. Anthony, the model of the hermits. That saint ate nothing but bread and salt and drank nothing but water. He lived in the desert and in a tomb, drove devils from him in the shape of a black child, was beaten once and again by demons, wore a garment of the skin of a wild beast, which he never changed, and never used water except for drinking. He had been well brought up and educated; but his biographer notes that, "for the future, his memory served him instead of books."

St. Jerome wrote the life of the hermit saint, Paul, who lived in a cavern where "he spent his life in prayer and solitude while the palm trees gave him food and clothes." St. Jerome adds: "I call Jesus and his holy angels to witness that I have seen monks, one of whom, shut up for thirty years, lived on barley bread and muddy water; another in an old cistern * * * was kept alive on five figs each day."

A philosopher asked Anthony, "How art thou content, father, since thou hast not the comfort of books?" Quoth Anthony, "My

book is the nature of created things; in it, when I choose, I can read the words of God."

St. Hilarion was the father of monachism in Palestine. His life was written by St. Jerome, who died a monk in Bethlehem. From his sixteenth to his twentieth year, he lived in a tiny cabin woven of rush and sedge; after that in a cell, four feet wide and too low for him to stand up straight in. He lay "on the bare ground and a layer of rushes, never washing the sack in which he was clothed, and saying that it was superfluous to seek for cleanliness in hair cloth. Nor did he change his tunic until the first was utterly in rags. He knew the scriptures by heart and recited them after his prayers and psalms." His only book when eighty years old, seems to have been a copy of the gospels, which he had made for his own use when young.

"Serapion, the Sindonite, was so called, because he wore nothing but a sindon or linen shirt. Though he could not read, he could say all the scriptures by heart."

Arsenius died, a monk, at ninety-five years of age, having wept in his cell for forty-five years. By the standard of his times, he had been learned in his youth, but gave up books for the monastery and desert.

Marana and Cyra were two women saints who spent forty-two years in a roofless cottage, "shrouded from head to foot in long veils," * * * "and underneath their veils, burdened on every limb, poor wretches, with such a load of iron chains and rings that a strong man," Bishop Theodoret says, "could not have stood under the weight." They had fasted at times for many days together. The Bishop comments upon their holiness with rapturous admiration.

St. Simeon used to fast for forty days together. He lived for many years on the top of a high peak. The account of the visit of his mother to him is instructive. She begged and implored him to come out of the tower in which he was walled up, or to admit her, but he would do neither. He heard her voice and spoke to her, refusing to see her. The biographer says: "But she began to say:

"By Christ who formed thee, if there is a probability of seeing thee who hast been so long a stranger to me, let me see thee; or if not, let me only hear thy voice and die at once, for thy father is dead in sorrow because of thee. And now, do not destroy me for very bitterness, my son."

Saying this, for sorrow and weeping, she fell asleep; for during three days and three nights, she had not ceased entreating him. Then the blessed Simeon prayed the Lord for her, and she forthwith gave up the ghost."

Of St. Godric we are told, he was no scholar, but had gradually learned by heart the Psalter. He was an Englishman, but as great an ascetic as his continental brethren.

It is evident that the monks and hermits were not literary or scientific men. They placed the narrowest interpretation on those New Testament texts which speak of the "wisdom of this world" as "foolishness with God," and which caution believers to "avoid profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called."

When Constantine, about 325, made Christianity the State religion, asceticism was the highest ideal of the instituted church. Eusebius, one of his bishops, ascribed the neglect of learning among Christians "to contempt of such useless labor," saying they preferred "turning their souls to the exercise of better things." It was held that the Bible contained all it is necessary for man to know, and that science is sufficiently revealed therein.

"Is it possible," says Lactantius, another father of the Church of the same period, "that man can be so absurd as to believe that the crops and the trees on the other side of the earth hang downwards and that men have their feet higher than their heads?"

The ink was hardly dry on Constantine's proclamation of Christianity as the religion of the Empire, when a bareheaded and black gowned priest started on foot from Constantinople for Athens, bearing an edict which closed up at once all the government schools of science and philosophy and abolished the salaries theretofore paid the professors by the Emperor.

To be a graduate of one of these schools was enough to exclude a man from all employment under the Christian government.

Libanius, a celebrated professor of that day, complains that the Imperial Court looked with an evil eye on the schools. "Men of education," he said, "were driven away and ignorant upstarts promoted to places of honor. Graduates in philosophy and rhetoric found all the avenues to wealth and honor closed to them and were glad to get a place as Emperor's messenger or to wear the livery of household servants."

Under other edicts, the pagan temples in many parts of the Empire were seized and turned into churches or levelled with the ground. The fine libraries attached to them were destroyed; their beautiful statues were overthrown, mutilated and, oftentimes, burned for lime.

About 390, Euriapus, a learned pagan of Lydia, wrote: "Thus, these warlike and courageous champions, after causing general ruin, and stretching forth their hands, not stained with blood indeed, but befouled with avarice, boasted that they had overcome the gods, and, taking credit for their impiety and sacrilege, let loose against the holy places the so-called monks, who were men indeed in outward shape, but of swinish life and manners, who openly committed abominations without number. * * * For any one who liked to put a black coat upon his back, and a sour look upon his face, could lord it like a tyrant."

Libantius, a learned professor of the same century, who had retired from Constantinople to Antioch, thus vented his indignation:

"This black-coated gentry who are more ravenous than elephants * * * in defiance of existing laws, hurry to attack the temples, some with staves and stones and steel, others even with fisticuffs and kicks. The temples fall an easy prey; the roofs are stripped, the walls hurled down, the statues dragged away, the altars overthrown. The priests must hold their peace or die. When one is ruined they hurry to a second or a third and pile fresh trophies in defiance of the law. Such acts of violence occur in the cities, but far more in the country."

For more than sixty years, after the decree of Constantine, the Serapion of Alexandria, in Egypt, had escaped destruction at the hands of the monks. This was due to several causes. It was

an old institution and the pride of the city on account of its magnificent architecture. It was visible over the Mediterranean as far as the eye could reach, being placed on an eminence and towering high in the air. Its rows of gigantic columns were of the finest marble in the world. Long and broad marble steps led up to its front and the equipages of rich citizens could be driven up a beautiful inclined plane in the rear to the level of the temple. It was not only a temple but a university and library. The splendors of the religious ceremonies of the Greeks could be seen here. The university, with its numerous professors and students, was the same in which Euclid had produced his geometry, and the Egyptians had perfected the astronomy of the Ptolemaic system. It was not so prosperous as it had been, but young men still came to it from all parts of the civilized world.

The library, too, was one of the finest. Not so large as the one collected by the Ptolemies before the Christian era and destroyed in the Bruchium, by fire, at the time of Cæsar's siege; but it contained the collection of the King of Pergamos, which had been presented to Cleopatra by Mark Antony, and the additions of three centuries.

It offended the pious Theophilus, the Christian Bishop of Alexandria, that the Serapion, with its philosophy of Aristotle and Plato, and its Greek ceremonial of worship should divert the attention of Alexandria from Christianity. He petitioned the Emperor at Constantinople for leave to destroy it, and his petition was granted.

On a spring morning in the year 389, of the Christian era, the military formed a grand cordon around the Serapion. Then, the Bishop and his train in the background, bareheaded and barefooted monks filed slowly within the Military. The population of the city, the professors and students looked on; the edict was read; the Bishop applied the torch; the building was fired in a hundred places by the monks; and the black smoke carried to the sky the best product of the Greek civilisation of nine centuries. When night came, all that remained of the famous library of Alexandria

was a mass of cinders; and a band of hooded monks praised God over the ruins!

This signal triumph over paganism greatly strengthened the power and increased the number of ascetics. Many persons abandoned the ordinary pursuits of life and fled to the desert monasteries. On those interminable expanses of white sand, where there were no trees with waving foliage, no rivulets with crystal waters, no birds, no flowers, nothing but sky and desolate wastes, it was easier to think of, and hope for, the future life. On the sands of Nitria, there arose twenty monasteries; on their stone floors bare-footed monks chanted prayers every hour in the day; in their cheerless cells ascetics fasted, watched and scourged themselves with bloody thongs.

In the twenty-six years that followed the burning of the Serapion, the University of Alexandria began to re-establish itself. Some of the professors reopened their courses; students, who had been scattered among the schools of Asia Minor and Greece, came again in small numbers to Alexandria. The Bruchium and Serapion had been destroyed; the Museum was now the nucleus of the University. How many books there were, what apparatus there was, is not known. Everything that was done for Greek philosophy, was done in the presence of a jealous Christian patriarch whose authority rivalled that of the Roman Governor.

In the year 415, of the Christian era, the most distinguished professor in Alexandria was a woman. Hypatia was the daughter of a learned mathematician and professor. In her youth she had been sent away to school at Athens, because of the destruction of the University at Alexandria. Her life had been spent in study, in the best schools and among learned men. She was a mathematician and philosopher. Heaven had endowed her with the gift of touching the human soul. Her presence was magnetic and her voice unsealed the fountains of human feeling. She had the power which in modern times has been wielded by Mrs. Siddons, Rachel, Angelina Grimke, and other women. Her renown was coextensive with the Roman empire. Her lectures on Neo-Platonism attracted the best intellects not only of Egypt but of other countries.

At the time Cyril, a monk, was Bishop of Alexandria. Full of the intolerant bigotry of his order, he determined that Hypatia should be silenced and the Museum destroyed.

At his summons the Nitrian monasteries poured forth their hordes. Across the sandy plains of north Egypt, thousands of black-gowned and barefooted men with shaved heads,—men gaunt and pale with fastings,—made their way, chanting hymns, to Alexandria.

On their arrival they were duly organized and instructed by the Bishop's agents. Next morning they waylaid Hypatia on the street by which she was wont to drive to her lecture room. They dragged her from her carriage, smote her to the earth with fists and clubs, tore off her garments and hurried her, bleeding and naked, through the streets to the cathedral, then up its marble steps and through its lofty nave to the altar.

There she turned and stretched out her hands as if she would speak; but in all that monkish crowd she met no glance of human pity. Her voice was lost in the cries and shouts of that murderous mob. Then her heart failed her, and sinking on her knees before the crucifix, she prayed Christ to touch with pity the hearts of those fanatics. But, as she prayed, the monk Peter dashed out her brains with a club. In a moment she was hacked and torn to pieces, and the frenzied monks went in procession through the streets, bearing upon a spear a woman's head, whose long, fair tresses were flecked with blood! Her death has been dramatically described by Charles Kingsley.

After the murder the Museum was sacked and pillaged, its pagan works destroyed and its professors silenced.

Whether the University of Alexandria recovered from this blow, history does not tell. Nor, whether a library was again collected there. This is not probable, for the patriarch was adverse and had great power; the Roman governors took little interest in literature or learning; and the public revenues were needed by the Emperor. A few books probably were gathered by professors and teachers; but when the Persians conquered Egypt in 616, there is no sufficient evidence that there was a library at Alexandria; and it

is improbable that there was one there in 630, when the Moslems became the conquerors of the city.

What was done in Egypt was done elsewhere in the Eastern Empire. Justinian, a Christian Emperor, gave the finishing blow to the schools of philosophy and science, at Athens, by confiscating their private endowments and private property and abolishing the salaries of the teachers. Every school not under influence distinctively ecclesiastical was ostracised as pagan.

One of the early popes, Gregory I., is said to have collected all the ancient classics he could find at Rome and to have made a bonfire of them! This, in the Dark Ages was greatly to his credit. In these latter days, however, it has been denied by some papistical writers.

It was not long after Gregory, that the fury of the Iconoclasts broke out afresh. About the year 726, under the Emperor Leo, the Isaurian, it howled like a tempest over the Christian world. The pictures of Christ and the saints which had been placed in some of the churches were torn down and trampled under foot; the statues of Isis and Osiris which had been adopted as those of the Virgin Mary and child and left in the churches, and the rude statues of the saints, which were found here and there, were thrown from their pedestals. A savage war of extermination was waged against the statues of pagan gods which had survived the bigotry of several centuries. It was "impious" to carve in stone such gods as Apollo, Hercules, Mars and Jupiter, and such goddesses as Diana, Minerva and Venus. Most of these statues were wholly destroyed; many of them burned into lime. The marble statue of Jesus, erected by Alexander Severus, in the third century, was demolished. Some statues escaped with mutilation. The frightened owners of others, wishing to save them for times more appreciative of art, buried them deep under the earth or sunk them in streams. It is only a few years since a statue of a pagan god was fished up from the bottom of the Tiber, where it had probably lain for 1200 years. When the mud and shells were scraped off, it was found to be not much the worse for its long concealment.

When the tempest of iconoclasm burst forth, it is probable that

but few of the classics were in private hands; for, during several centuries, it had been a dangerous thing for any one to possess them. The Inquisition in matters of faith had a short way with men suspected of worshipping Jupiter; but a number of public libraries were destroyed and among them, one at Constantinople, containing 120,000 volumes. This was the Imperial library, and its destruction was, doubtless, owing to the hatred for all learning not purely religious. It was a sacrifice made by the Emperor to the bigotry of the monks.

This same spirit of hostility to human learning is shown in the acts of the Crusaders. They destroyed the libraries which had been again collected at Constantinople; and, in 1109, made a campaign against Tripoli, chiefly for the purpose of destroying the magnificent Saracen library at that place. It is said to have been larger and finer than the one at Alexandria ever was.

It is a matter of history that the Saracens had seventy large public libraries in Spain, containing altogether more than 400,000 volumes. Two of them, those at Cordova and Granada, were attached to the Moorish universities at those places. The catalogue of one of them is said to have filled forty volumes. All these libraries were nevertheless destroyed by the Roman Catholic Spaniards, who regarded them as the literature of Satan.

But why multiply historical instances? It would require a volume to mention them all. The "healthy literature" of the monks consisted of homilies, lessons, missals, prayers, response books, the writings of the fathers and a little grammar, rhetoric and history, chiefly ecclesiastical. It was not thought consistent with a pious life to study the classics.

Alcuin, a learned man, became a monk in the middle of the eighth century. His monkish biographer says of him:

"This man of God had, when he was young, read the books of the ancient philosophers and the lies of Virgil, which he did not wish now to hear or desire that his disciples should read."

Alcuin rebuked one of his monks for reading Virgil and spoke of the danger of being "polluted with Virgil's language."

Odo, Bishop of Clugni, read one day in Virgil, but dreaming of snakes the same night, he accepted the divine warning, renounced Virgil and his pomps and ever afterwards sought his spiritual and mental nourishment in the Bible.

Peter Damian (988-1072) speaks of the "vanities of earthly science."

Honorius (1120) says:

"It grieves me when I consider the number of persons who, having lost their senses, are not ashamed to give their utmost labor to the investigation of the abominable figments of poets,"

He speaks of Hector, Plato, Virgil and Ovid who "are gnashing their teeth in the prison of the infernal Babylon under the cruel tyranny of Pluto."

Abelard (1142) asks:

"Why, then, do not the bishops and doctors of the Christian religion expel from the City of God those poets whom Plato forbade to enter into his kingdom of the world?"

Peter of Blois, Archbishop of London (1130—1200) upbraided a monk for studying "the foolish old fables of Hercules and Jove" and the lies and philosophy of the pagan authors.

In the opinion of Pope Gregory the Great it was "shameful" that a priest should study the classics.

From the year 325 to the year 1000 of our era all æsthetic sense seems to have fled from Western Europe. During that long period, with the exception of a moderately good book by Boethius, a statesman, there was not a single book produced whose literary form makes it valuable; not a single painting which any one cared to preserve; not a single statue which the world has not gladly allowed to perish. The best books were "The Fathers," those wonders of prolixity, the best paintings resembled the figures upon cheap China ware; and the best statues caricatured the anatomical proportions of the human form. The books prove that their authors had never studied the classics; the statues, that the artists had never studied ancient sculpture.

I will now briefly notice a few of the objections to the theory of this essay.

First: *That the monks were good classical scholars; hence, they were inclined to preserve the classics.*

This is not true of the monks of any age; it is deplorably false of those who lived in mediæval times. It is believed that between the beginning of Christian monasticism and the year 1100 there was not a single scholar of fame who had been a monk from his youth. All of the famous writers who were monks were men who had been in civil office; or had been educated in the secular schools; or had practiced law or medicine; or taught rhetoric or oratory. To this class belong Augustine, Jerome, Tertullian, Prudentius and Cyprian. This was the case, too, in later times; Gilbert A. Becket and Richard de Bury had been Chancellors of England; Peter of Blois had studied law at Paris and Bologna; Thomas, Abbot of Evesham, had been a lawyer, then Professor at Oxford and Exeter; all these men were of middle or old age when they went into the church and at once took high honors. An abbacy or priory was then the stepping stone to a bishopric. After they became churchmen most of them denounced the classics as pagan. Such men as Wycliffe and Roger Bacon owed no part of their education to the monasteries.

Though the churchmen generally knew a little Latin, chiefly that of the ceremonial, they certainly knew no Greek before Boccaccio's time. About 1350 that poet could not find a copy of the Iliad and Odyssey in Italy and was obliged to send to Athens for it. It was in 1453, a little more than a hundred years after that, when the capture of Constantinople by the Saracens sent hundreds of educated Greeks through western Europe and made the study of Greek more common among the learned. But this was after the invention of printing.

It is doing no injustice to the monks brought up in the monasteries, to say that of the hundreds of thousands in their orders during the Middle Ages there were scarcely half a dozen who are reputed now to have been scholars. King Alfred said that, during his reign, there was hardly a monk from the Thames to the Channel who could go through the church service correctly. Robertson, the Scotch historian, gives many illustrations of their dense ignorance; and so does Hallam. The few exceptions were

such men as Theodore of Tarsus and the venerable Bede. Theodore had been educated in the schools of Asia Minor and brought with him to England a good library of Latin and Greek books, which he presented to his monastery. Bede was Theodore's pupil and had the advantage of his library. His learning would not pass muster now-a-days.

We need no clearer proof of the character of the literature cultivated by the mediæval monks than the list of books which each priest was then expected to own. These were a psalter, a book of epistles, gospels, and hymns, a missal, a manual, a Gerim, a pas-sional, a penitential and a lectionary. With these his library was complete; and he was a fortunate man who had them all.

His light reading consisted of homilies, prayers, the works of the fathers and the legends of the saints,—many of which, it must be admitted, will compare for imagination with the Arabian Nights Entertainments.

Second: *But it is objected that there were schools attached to the monasteries, and that the monks must have taught the classics.*

It is true that to many of the monasteries schools were attached; but these were of the kind now called parochial and were used chiefly to train the children in the church creed and services. They were far inferior to the secular schools, of which there were many. From the biographies of illustrious men we learn that they were rarely educated at monasteries. For instance Lanfranc was taught at Pavia, Bologna and Avranche and established a famous school at Bec. He became a monk late in life and Archbishop, but his learning was not due to monkish teachers.

Third: *A third objection is, that, in each monastery, there was a scriptorium, or copying room, in which the monks regularly copied the classics.*

Neither of these assertions is accurate; and the second is untrue in regard to the centuries preceding the twelfth.

In the last edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, there are given, under the title "Abbey," thirteen ground plans of representa-

tive monasteries. These show every part of the building down to the smallest offices and out-houses; these are as follows:

- | | | |
|--|---|--------------|
| 1. Santa Laura, Mount Athos. | | |
| 2. Coptic Monastery | | |
| 3. St. Mary's Abbey, at York. | } | Benedictine. |
| 4. Clugny. | | |
| 5. Clairvaux, No. 1. | } | Cistercian. |
| 6. Clairvaux, No. 2. | | |
| 7. Citeaux. | | |
| 8. Kirkstall Abbey, Yorkshire. | } | Benedictine. |
| 9. Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire. | | |
| 10. St. Augustine's Abbey, Bristol, | | |
| 11. Carthusian Monastery, at Clermont. | | |
| 12. Carthusian Cell, at Clermont. | | |

The only one which shows a *scriptorium* is St. Gall, a Benedictine monastery, erected about 820. The room devoted to the purpose of copying adjoins the transept and is no longer than the sacristy and vestry. The St. Gall monks had more than they could do to copy the books used by the priests in church service.

The clear inference from these facts is that, while in one out of many monasteries, copying of some kind was systematically done, it was not done in most of them, unless by individual monks in their private cells. At St. Gall it was probably done under the supervision of the Abbot and confined to religious books; in the others copying of the same kind was done occasionally, and no doubt, by monks, who excelled in penmanship.

Of the thirteen monasteries named only three are marked as having "libraries," a fact extremely significant as to the want of appreciation of literature at the time the monasteries were built.

If the monks had copied the classics, their ardent advocate, Mr. Merryweather, would have found the proofs of it and printed them in his curious book, *Bibliomania*, which is devoted chiefly to a vindication of their literary character. He mentions all the monkish copyists known and, whenever he can, every classic copied by any of them; but he fails to produce a single instance of such copying between the foundation of the first monastery and the year 1178. We have to thank him for mentioning numerous donations to monas-

teries of private libraries containing classics. There is no proof, however, that the classics so presented had been copied by monks; and the donations are subsequent to the tenth century.

The Benedictine order was established about the year 529; and it is to its practised penmen that the Church of the Middle Ages looked for copies of the Latin Fathers, homilies, prayers, missals, offices, responsals, antepsonals, saints' lives, legends and other religious books. But it is not proved that those pious men copied the classical works to any great extent, at any time, or at all prior to the twelfth century. About the year 1178, one of their monks, a famous penman and illuminator, copied the works of Terence, Suetonius, Claudian and Boethius. This is the earliest case I have been able to find, and it stands alone in the twelfth century.

The reputation for learning enjoyed by the Benedictine order is due to its early cultivation of religious literature, and to its publication, since the year 1600, of histories and works of general and scientific information. Their earliest historical work, a chronicle of their own order, was not published until 1609. But this was 800 years after the dawn of Latin classical learning, 600 years after such learning was common among literary men; and 156 years after the capture of Constantinople and the exodus of learned Greeks from Eastern to Western Europe. Their earliest work of a purely literary character was not published until the eighteenth century.

Fourth: A fourth objection is that most of the extant manuscripts of Latin classics were found in monasteries.

Some of them were; it is not proved that most of them were; and surely the manuscripts of the Greek classics were not. The fact that the manuscripts of the Latin classics which were found in monasteries were not found in the libraries of those institutions shows that they were not held in honor by the monks. They were found in cellar pits, vaults, dark holes, dirty passages, dry wells, old towers, in many a den and dungeon. All the manuscript hunters, from Petrarch and Boccaccio in the fourteenth century to Bracciolini in the fifteenth, give the same account of the places where these

valuable relics were found. They had been acquired probably for the parchment they were written on, not for the works themselves. In our century similar facts are reported:

Lord Prudhoe who visited a Nitrian monastery in 1828 says that he found a pile of manuscripts in a vault into which they had been tumbled through a trap-door. They were covered deep with dust and had been lying there apparently for centuries.

Robert Curzon, a member of Parliament, visited one of the Egyptian monasteries in 1833. Going into the chapel at time of service, he saw that each barefooted monk stood upon a folio manuscript which kept him from the cold stone floor. On further search he found a vault full of old manuscripts in all stages of decay.

Tischendorff, the German manuscript hunter, gives a still more graphic account of the neglect of manuscripts by the monks.

The question naturally occurs:

If the monks did not copy the classics, how are we to account for the copies found in the libraries of the monasteries?

In the monastery chronicles we find frequent mention of gifts and bequests to them of libraries by civilians. A large number of these donations are mentioned by Merryweather in his curious book on the subject. He tells also what they were, gives some of the catalogues. Generally there were none but religious books; sometimes a few classics, especially after the year 1100, when liberal studies were in fashion among the rich and great.

In 1305 there were 1100 volumes in the library of the Abbey of Ramsey. Of these there were:

70 Breviaries,
32 Grails,
29 Processionals,
100 Psalters.

There were five Greek books and seventeen Latin. But among the latter there was no Cicero, or Cæsar, or Tacitus, or Quintilian, or Pliny. It was clearly a miscellaneous collection, the volumes having been donated by different civilians.

In 1073 the Lord Chancellor of England presented to the Cathedral of Exeter, of which place he was bishop, seventy volumes, probably all on religious subjects. After 1100 the larger gifts of books contained one or more of the classics.

It is by these gifts, made by learned civilians and semi-secular dignitaries of the Church, and the fact that, as a general thing, the monasteries were respected in time of war, that in my opinion, the finding of classics in the monasteries can be accounted for. To infer that the monks copied them because they had them would be as loose as to infer that the Venetian Senate had copied the many valuable manuscripts found in their library, all which were either presented or bought.

HOW, THEN, WERE THE CLASSICS PRESERVED?

During the darkest of the Dark Ages, though there were no schools for the poor, there were some in many cities and towns for the children of the rich. The law school established at Beyroot in the fourth century, flourished until the conquest of the place by the Saracens. The school established at Bologna in the fifth century gradually developed into a university, at which about 1220 there were ten thousand students; and in 1300, fourteen thousand. The schools at Oxford and Cambridge grew into universities before 900; and in 1320 there were at Oxford 30,000 students. The school at Paris became a university soon after the first Crusade and had quite as many students as Oxford. Between the years 850 and 1000 there were many learned men and good academies in Germany. Before the year 1200 there were twenty-three universities in Europe, besides the Moorish universities in Spain, which were reputed the best of all. At all these institutions, grammar and rhetoric were taught; and these included a training in the Latin and more or less instruction in the Latin classics. Greek was not taught perhaps at any of them until after the invention of printing.

Schools of a lower order existed in all the cities and principal towns. Guizot (*History of Civilization*) gives a list of many which existed before Charlemagne; and that monarch established a great

many. A little after him and about 823 the King of Lombardy had, by edict, opened schools in nine of the cities in his dominions.

There were famous schools in Padua, Rome, Marseilles and Toulouse during the sixth and seventh centuries, and one at Carthage up to the date of the Saracen conquest.

As these schools were primarily secular, they created, each one about itself, a demand for classical works. Around each university there grew up again into prosperity the trades of the bookseller and the copyist, which had become insignificant during the reign of the monks. But these trades had at no time been extinct. Before and after the conquest of Rome by the Goths, there had been booksellers, stationers, antiquarians, copyists and illuminators. All these are spoken of by Cassiodorus a little after 500; by Isidor, about 600; and by Benedict, of Wearmouth, about 690; he visited the Continent five times to buy books. About 990, Gerbert, who afterwards became Pope Sylvester II., and who was a graduate of the Moorish university at Cordova, in Spain, and passed for a sorcerer because of his learning, wrote to a friend at Rome to procure him a copy of a book which, he said, could be had of some of the copyists, who, he adds, "may be found in all parts of Italy." In 1170, Peter of Blois, who had collected a good library, speaks of his buying from "public dealers in books," and gives an amusing account of his buying from a bookseller at Paris a book which he left at the store and which was taken off by force, by an eminent dignitary who was eager to have the volume.

In 1287 De Bury mentions having bought manuscripts from booksellers at Antwerp, Brabant, and Paris, and other cities in Europe.

About the same time, Dante was studying at Padua and Bologna where the students were supplied with books by dealers who employed professional copyists.

The booksellers were so important a class to the students in the university towns that the universities generally obtained legislative authority over them and subjected them to many rules. At Paris the price of books was fixed by the faculty; and the dealers were compelled to let books for hire at fixed rates to the students.

The prices and rates were quite low, not much higher indeed than those of a circulating library of our own days.

As the academies and universities, manuscript dealers, antiquarians, copyists and illuminators had co-existed for more than five centuries before the invention of printing; as the greater number of existing ancient manuscripts have been found not in the monasteries, but in the library of the Venetian Senate, to which Petrarch bequeathed all his books; in the library of Florence, built up principally by Lorenzo and Cosmo de Medici; in the library of Oxford, to which Wycliffe and Roger Bacon, each, left his collection; in that of the Vatican, the books of which were bought after the Middle Ages, by Nicholas IV. and Leo X., wherever they could find them; in the royal library of Paris, made up by the Government; and in other libraries of secular character; as there is no positive proof that, prior to the year 1178, a monk ever copied a classical book, and many facts making such copying highly improbable; as the classical books found in the monasteries are all easily accounted for by known donations by civilians and acquisitions made since the revival of classical learning; and as it was, in the language of one of the popes, Gregory, "a shameful thing that it should be said of a priest, that the praises of Jupiter and the praises of Christ should issue from the same mouth"; in other words, that a priest should study or teach the classics; is it unjust to deny to the monks what is now claimed for them by some Roman Catholic writers, the honor of having preserved those masterpieces?

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